

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-12

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DODE-00 PM-07 H-03 INR-10 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-10 PA-03

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INFO AMEMBASSY AMMAN

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AMCONSUL JERUSALEM

AMEMBASSY JIDDA

AMEMBASSY KHARTOUM

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV

AMEMBASSY TRIPOLI

AMEMBASSY TUNIS

USMISSION USUN

C O N F I D E N T I A L CAIRO 2533

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TAGS: PINT PFOR EG

SUBJECT: MUSA SABRI, NATIONAL DEBATE, THE NATIONAL
CHARTER, AND DE-NASSERIZATION

REF: (A) CAIRO 2430; (B) CAIRO 2516

1. AUGUST 21 AKHBAR CONTAINS ARTICLE BY MUSA SABRI
ANSWERING QUESTIONS RAISED ABOUT EGYPT'S NATIONAL DEBATE,
ENVISIONED IN RECENT ASU/PA WORKING PAPER (REFTEL A).
SABRI'S BASIC POINTS ARE THAT (A) EGYPT IS MOVING INTO
PERIOD OF EXTROVERSION AND OPENING UP, BOTH EXTERNALLY AND
INTERNALLY; (B) "SOCIALISM IN PROSPERITY, NOT SOCIALISM
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IN POVERTY" IS KEYSTONE OF NEW ECONOMIC POLICY; (C) WHILE

CAPITALISTS AND COMMUNISTS ABROAD ARE HUGGING EACH OTHER, ARABS MUST ALSO DRAW TOGETHER; (D) EGYPT SHOULD COLLECT ITSELF; TO DO SO IT NEEDS A "CHARTER OF VICTORY."

2. SABRI'S COMMENTS ON CHANGES THAT ARE PRESENTLY OCCURRING IN EGYPT HAVE BECOME A STANDARD THEME FOR MAJOR EGYPTIAN WRITERS. HIS REMARK THAT A "CHARTER OF VICTORY" IS NEEDED, HOWEVER, IS THE FIRST SPECIFIC PUBLIC INDICATION THAT EGYPT'S NATIONAL CHARTER OF 1962, THE CORNERSTONE OF NASSERIST SOCIALISM, MAY BE CHANGED, ALTHOUGH SADAT MENTIONED IN AN ADDRESS TO THE ASU CENTRAL COMMITTEE ON JULY 16 THE NEED FOR A NEW "IDEOLOGICAL DOCUMENT" THROUGH WHICH THE NATIONAL CHARTER WOULD BE INTERPRETED. ON THAT OCCASION SADAT SAID THAT THE NEW DOCUMENT WAS NECESSARY TO "AVERT ANY MISINTERPRETATION SUCH AS WHEN THE CHARTER WAS INTERPRETED IN FAVOR OF ONE PARTICULAR DOCTRINE, THE MARXIST DOCTRINE." WE HAVE BEEN TOLD BY ONE WELL-INFORMED EGYPTIAN THAT THERE HAS BEEN SOME PRIVATE DISCUSSION ABOUT WRITING A NEW CHARTER SINCE THE OLD IS INSUFFICIENT AS A GUIDE TO EGYPT'S NEW DIRECTIONS. IT IS TOO SOCIALIST, OR EVEN TOO "COMMUNIST," ACCORDING TO THE SOURCE'S INFORMANTS.

3. THE SUGGESTION THAT A NEW CHARTER BE DRAFTED REFLECTS NOT MERELY THE COURSE, BUT THE SPEED WITH WHICH SADAT IS NOW READY TO DE-NASSERIZE EGYPT. UNTIL FAIRLY RECENTLY, VARIOUS ACTIONS WHICH SADAT TOOK TO RELEASE EGYPT FROM SOME OF NASSER'S MOST OPPRESSIVE POLICIES MOVED AT AN UNEVEN PACE. AMONGST DECREES PROVIDING FOR GREATER FOREIGN INVESTMENT IN EGYPT (1971), THE DESEQUESTRATION OF PROPERTIES OWNED BY LARGE AND WELL-KNOWN FAMILIES (1972), AND THE IMPOSITION OF A PERSONAL STYLE OF ADMINISTRATION WHICH WAS GENERALLY MORE LIBERAL, SADAT TOOK OTHER MEASURES WHICH WERE STRONGLY REMINISCENT OF HIS PREDECESSOR. HE WAS NOT AVERSE TO USING NASSER'S TECHNIQUE OF LARGE-SCALE ARRESTS, INVESTIGATION AND PURGES FROM THE PARTY AT TIMES OF STRESS, FOR EXAMPLE. NEVERTHELESS, THE GENERAL TREND HAS BEEN TOWARD A MORE CAPITALIST ORIENTED SYSTEM WITHIN WHICH THE INCENTIVES OF STATUS, PROFIT, AND PERSONAL SATISFACTION (AS OPPOSED TO NATIONAL AMBITION) WERE REINFORCED, AND WITHIN WHICH SOCIALISM AND EVEN

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ARABISM HAVE BEEN CONTINUOUSLY DE-EMPHASIZED. SINCE JULY 23, HOWEVER, THE RATE OF CHANGE HAS ACCELERATED. PART OF THE REASON LIES IN THE FACT THAT SADAT HAS BEEN PUSHED BY A NUMBER OF FORCES IN AN ANTI-NASSERIST DIRECTION (REFTEL B). IT APPEARS TO US THAT AT THE SAME TIME, HOWEVER, AND PERHAPS FOR THE FIRST TIME SINCE SADAT'S ACCESSION TO POWER IN OCTOBER, 1970, THE INTERNAL SITUATION HAS BEEN SUFFICIENTLY STABLE TO PERMIT HIM TO

MOVE WITH SUCH SPEED. FOR THE PAST FIVE MONTHS, EGYPT'S INTERNAL SCENE HAS BEEN UNUSUALLY CALM. SADAT EMERGED FROM THE WINTER OF 1972-73 HAVING WEATHERED A RELATIVELY TURBULENT PERIOD DURING WHICH STUDENT DISTURBANCES, INTELLECTUAL DISCONTENT, PRICE INSTABILITY, AND--APPARENTLY--ONE MAJOR COUP ATTEMPT. SINCE MARCH, AND PARTICULARLY SINCE SADAT'S CRACKDOWN ON DISSIDENT EGYPTIAN JOURNALISTS AND THE INSTALLATION OF A NEW CABINET, THE FEW INTERNAL WRINKLES THAT HAVE APPEARED HAVE BEEN MINOR, AND EGYPT SEEMED TO SETTLE DOWN TO A GENERAL ACCEPTANCE OF THE SITUATION. WHILE SADAT HAS NOT BECOME VISIBLY STRONGER OR GREATLY INCREASED HIS POPULARITY DURING THIS PERIOD, HE HAS BEEN ABLE TO TURN HIS ATTENTION AWAY FROM PROBLEMS OF REGIME STABILITY AND QUESTIONS RELATED TO HIS PERSONAL POWER POSITION. HE HAS EVIDENTLY USED THIS PERIOD TO SUMMON HIMSELF AND MOVE ONTO AN IDEOLOGICAL OFFENSIVE.

4. THIS HAS CREATED SOME FRICTION, HOWEVER, AND WE ARE LIKELY TO SEE MORE. THE HEYKAL/NEGUIB DISPUTE, FOR EXAMPLE, REPRESENTS A THINLY DISGUISED STRUGGLE BETWEEN NASSER'S HEIRS (HEYKAL) AND SADAT HIMSELF. WE EXPECT SADAT TO ENCOUNTER INCREASED CRITICISM FROM QADHAAFI, WHO WILL NOT BE AMUSED BY THE ASCENDENCY OF NASSER'S DETRACTORS OR BY THE TOPPLING OF HIS PERSONAL IDEAL. ON BALANCE, HOWEVER, WE BELIEVE THAT SADAT CAN CONTAIN THESE FORCES, AND THAT THE CURRENT TREND WILL BE POPULAR WITHIN THE EGYPTIAN ESTABLISHMENT. MOREOVER, AS LONG AS SADAT CAN PROMISE SOMETHING FOR THE OTHER SEGMENTS OF THE SOCIAL SPECTRUM, INCLUDING BOTH THE INDUSTRIAL AND AGRICULTURAL PROLETARIAT, IT WILL PROBABLY BE GENERALLY ACCEPTABLE THROUGHOUT THE COUNTRY AS WELL. THIS IS WHAT SADAT NOW APPEARS TO BE DOING, USING THE GOVERNMENT APPARATUS TO CARRY ON A "NATIONAL DIALOGUE" WITH THE EGYPTIAN PEOPLE, TO EXPLAIN
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WHAT IS IN EFFECT AN ACCELERATED PROCESS OF DE-NASSERIZATION PROMPTED BY EXTERNAL FACTORS OVER WHICH THE COUNTRY HAS LITTLE CONTROL.
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